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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SCHUSTER LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH

REF: STATE 27344

1. Post received May 6 a letter dated May 4 from Slovak President Schuster (who leaves office June 15) to President Bush, and transmits text per reftel.

Begin text:

President of the Slovak Republic

Bratislava, 4 May 2004

Your Excellency,

In connection with my forthcoming departure from the office of head of state, which I have held since June 1999, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you in recognition of your exceptional contribution to the development of Slovak-American relationships during this period thanks to your good will towards Slovakia and its citizens.

I consider the past five years of our mutual relations to have been an exceptionally productive time, thanks in part to our direct personal dialogue. In this I see a good basis for the future and it is my belief that you will also continue to develop and enhance the ties of mutual solidarity with my successor to this office, particularly since we have recently become a member country of the North Atlantic Alliance.

It is with pleasure that I look back on our meetings, which were held in the spirit of friendship and supported my opinion of you as a great leader and a man of decisions. It is my belief that history will objectively judge all of your personal and political actions which you have undertaken during your term of office in one of the most important positions in world politics. One of the most debated decisions was the military intervention in Iraq and the toppling of the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein. I am convinced that this action was justified, and history will show the correctness of this decision. I know from personal experience that those who take brave and pioneering decisions seldom receive acknowledgment at the time. It is only after an appropriate interval, when passion subsides and reality resurfaces, that the scales tip in their favour.

Your Excellency, I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the high quality of the successful mission of the Ambassador of the United States of America to the Slovak Republic, Mr. Ronald Weiser, who undertook a great deal of work for the development of Slovak-American cooperation in all areas of our joint interests. I would like to emphasise that the Ambassador had a significant role in the exceptional development of Slovak-American relations and political dialogue, which thanks to his endeavours reached a level of intensity and quality which they had never previously attained. I particularly value his work in the area of the development of economic cooperation and in the presentation of business and investment opportunities in Slovakia for American businessmen. I am greatly appreciative of the productive contacts of Ambassador Weiser with Slovak constitutional bodies, his untiring work meeting citizens from all the regions of Slovakia and his excellent preparation which enabled him to better understand Slovakia. I would like to state that I consider him to be one of the very best ambassadors with which I have had the opportunity to cooperate.

I should like in conclusion, Your Excellency, to assure you that I remain an ardent supporter of the systematic development of Slovak-American relations. I shall also continue to support you in the fight against international terrorism and the defence of human rights worldwide. I am certain that your eminent qualities and professional attributes will again ensure your victory in the forthcoming presidential elections, and in this regard I would like to express my personal support to you. I would consider it as an honour, if we maintained our good personal contacts in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to express to you my deepest respect and I also wish you and your dear wife Laura all the best.

His Excellency

George W. Bush
President of the United States of America

Washington

End text.

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